

One of the cornerstone of our democracy is a free and independent press that does not owe allegiance to any government or political entity. The sacred duty of the press is to provide the American public with fair, unbiased reporting on current events. In exchange for this vital service, the press is granted access to publicly owned airwaves. With the right to access this limited resource also comes a grave responsibility to assure that the public's needs are being met. Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers that media consolidation poses to the public's right to fair and unbiased news reporting.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But increasingly it has become apparent that when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for their bottom line and less of what the American people need to know for the sake of our democracy. Instead of forcing local stations to broadcast a manufactured "news" report from corporate headquarters, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter to our daily lives.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. I ask that you please acknowledge that our democracy is at stake in these matters, and that is far more important than any company's bottom line. Thank you.